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TOWN OR COUNTRY.

No one is so puzzled in the choice of a house as the man who has the world to choose from. Those who are compelled to live in a particular neighbourhood are generally the easiest suited and the best pleased. Liberty has its disadvantages in this as well as in other things. Many slaves lead apparently happy lives—sing, we suppose, at their work sometimes, for niggers are proverbially melodious—and take unbounded satisfaction in their dusky reunions. Thus there are people compelled by the slavery of civilisation to live in some one town, or street, or house, and who seem not only to acquiesce but rejoice in proportion as their tether is narrow. When it is of no use grumbling, the gratification of doing so is much diminished; not that it will ever lose its charm, or fail to give some sensible relief, but to growl continually, without any prospect of ever being able to bite, becomes at last monotonous. We have so many matters to settle and make up our minds about, that it is a positive relief to find even one thing fixed for us, beyond our choice or control.

The country parson is perhaps more freed than any man from the perplexities which accompany the choice of residence. He is tied not to a neighbourhood, but to a house. His anxieties about it are generally limited to furniture; the knottiest point for him to decide is, which shall be the day, and which the night nursery; whether he shall have one or two stalls in his stable, and where he shall build the pigsty.

He is most perplexed who has the widest range. There are people who wander about, not from a dislike of rest, but from a desire to find it; they cannot decide even upon a country. They fidget wearily over the continent, from inn to inn, probably telling half their chance-acquaintances that they are anxious to find a home. There are many, again, who have settled to live in England, but cannot make up their minds whether it shall be in town or country. Let me help to furnish these undecided vagabonds with some more *pros* and *cons* about the one great question of their lives. The case of rich people, who can afford to keep up two establishments, may be dismissed at once. We want to know which to choose, when we can't have both.

The subject is so complicated, however, so much depends upon your being married or single, grave or gay, man or woman, sensible or stuck up, humble or ambitious, that it would be tiresome to affect any tabulated advice or set of stiff social rules. We will take the things which come uppermost, according to that inscrutable law of thought which jerks and twists the thread of meditation, however evenly we may try to spin it ourselves.

The first obvious advantage of London life is to many people its independence, its freedom from the petty espionage of a village or small town. If you are married, and have but moderate means, there are many social deprivations and annoyances which, I will not say you cannot escape, but which are peculiar to the country. You are hospitable, and yet you don't like to eat without being eaten. But what are you to do when your neighbours are either too great or too small? You cannot exchange dinners successfully with the big squire, or comfortably with Mr What-do-ye-call-him, who, though he gives good meat and drink enough, yet sits below you in the social scale. If you were a bachelor, the case would be different; but you are, let us suppose, married, and therefore, however hospitably inclined, cannot follow your inclinations. But in London you may always find some people of your own standing, tastes, and income, whose society you can enjoy without any suspicion of extravagance or inequality. Of course, you can ape the entertainments of great people there, as well as anywhere else, if you are naturally a fool; but the temptation to do so is really, if you consider it, very small. There are few whom you astonish, or at least impose upon, by so doing. The neighbours whose jealousy you desire to excite—no doubt I am taking an extreme case, but then there are so many of them—the neighbours whose envy you wish to fire, don't know of your success or your attempt; there are many carriages driving down your street at all times. On the other hand, in the country, the gathering of beauty and fashion would have to pass the gates and windows of those who live for miles around. Inquiry would arise, astonishment, jealousy, contempt, admiration. But in town, only 19 and 21 know that 20 is 'at home,' except, of course, the housemaid over the way. Perhaps some idle member of No. 19's family may turn to the Post-office Directory, or more select catalogue, to see your hitherto unknown name; but as for admiration or envy, why, there is none.

You observe that I am speaking of the people who do not fare sumptuously every day, but make an occasional splash. The entertainments of the great are chronicled. One of their balls keeps the street awake. The public-house round the corner is full of powder and plush. But when No. 20 A puffs himself out beyond his usual girth, the penny-a-liners are silent. None beyond the guests know that anything great has come off.

On the other hand, if you can't in London easily make people envious by your display, you are not insulted by the gobbling of some local turkey-cock. Of course, it is very foolish to care for the absurd pretensions of your richer neighbour,

foolish to be annoyed by them, but in town you are spared the temptation to yield to this folly; nothing can be more wholesome to your village magnifico than a visit to the metropolis—an utterly unnoticed swim down the stream of Regent Street; or, let us say, a sharp public reprimand from a keeper not to point so perseveringly with his umbrella at the beasts in the Zoological Gardens.

The espionage of the country, the tyranny of the small, not the great, is far more irritating than the airs of the squireen. There is to many people something absolutely close and suffocating in the consciousness of half the place knowing, or caring to know, what you are most in the habit of eating at dinner, when you have your hair cut, and whether you take a bath in the morning. In the country, we all live in glass-houses. What you do, and what you don't do, finds its way throughout the circuit of village communion. Indeed, if a man shuts himself up there, and tries thus to avoid publicity, he takes the surest way to obtain it; the patient perseverance of the rustic gossip unravels the whole life of the recluse. In London, there is a sense of privacy unattainable elsewhere. You don't know who lives next door. I have no doubt but that the family assembled the other side of the wall at my right elbow are characters, odd, eccentric to a degree; but I don't know their name. Once, however, an elderly lady, without crinoline, called to see me, full of anxiety about a certain profligate tom-cat. It was my neighbour. Some days afterwards, my curiosity being a little stirred by this apparition, in the middle of a street at the west end, where rents are high, I looked oftener than usual for a week at the house. Once a cart called filled with mould, which the carter hoisted up over the leads. That house may be carpeted with turf, potatoes may grow in the dining-room, Nebuchadnezzar himself may be at grass there. Were our neighbours at Slough-cum-Puddle in the middle of Salisbury Plain, they would be famous in the county of Wilts; here they are unknown.

I venture to say, that if I were to work in my street with a week's beard, a suit of flannel and splashes, ay, and come back to my own house openly every evening to supper and rest, not a soul would know me. Why should not a labourer be needed somewhere about my premises? Drains wrong—what not. Or, perhaps the family is out of town; poor couple—man and wife—put in to look after the house. I might grind an organ or lead a bear down my street without a neighbour having suspicion it was me, or caring to ask any more if he knew so much. Why should not a bear-leader live at 229? Independence! privacy! give me one of those long streets about Portman Square, which in clear weather seem to lead right up to Hampstead.

With all this, however, it must be confessed that the independence of London is liable to be turned into licence. That same country espionage which frets the sensitive is only the evidence of wholesome public opinion in a disagreeable shape. When a man feels that he is not watched, that, in fact, no one cares where he is, or what he does, the great secondary safeguard of decency is removed. Nowhere can a man lead a more uninterruptedly selfish life than in London. He may shake off all those little proprieties and amenities of society which, though he be a solitary bachelor without accessible kin, do yet more or less connect him with the people he sees about. He may live like a wild beast, say in Baker Street, probably without comment or notice, if that be his rude wish, and he can afford to indulge it. For good or evil, there is no solitude like a crowd. In the matter of amusements, you will probably give precedence to town. If your object is to provide a quick succession of fresh sensations, London will satisfy you, use you up, burn away the wretched tallow in your little dip of life as fast, ay, faster than you like. But if by

amusement you mean what the word means, relaxation from study, from the Muses, then I take it you may find what you want in the country as well, if not much better, than anywhere else. After the confinement and depression of study, outdoor pursuits and pleasures are the best recreation; thus you get change, which is the essential thing. The mind, painfully bent over one thing, flies off with a spring when released. In London, it finds itself still in the midst of an anxious, irritating atmosphere, that of high-pressure intelligence. Then the country 'knits up the ravelled sleeve of care' with grateful silent speed—like sleep.

It might be difficult to fix on any spot likely long to be pleasant to a man who has nothing to do, but perhaps he can play at work better in the country than in the town. It is true that he has no club in the country, but then he can get through a good deal of time on the way to and from the festivities and magisterial gatherings of his neighbourhood. The stable and the garden, too, consume many hours. The old fogies in town who buy their own fish, often make the purchase of a dinner the chief centre of their morning-exercise, around which the appetite is expected to collect. Now, your country gentleman can't so kill his early hours; but he goes about with a spud in his hand, and gets through a good deal of his time in connection with pruning and flower-beds. One curious thing about him is the pressure of his incessant engagements. The less a man is employed, the less time he has to spare; a man with nothing to do has often not an hour of leisure. Hard work is the only receipt for hearty play, and *vice versa*. The want of true play, and the artificial substitution for it, make London bad for the artisan and his family. The man himself, with nerve and muscle strung up to high-pressure work for days, is let loose for rest; now, no one can live on rest, he must have play, and where shall the London mechanic, fresh from the depressing workshop, find it? Will he set the machinery of judgment in operation, clean and shave himself at once, put on his best clothes, and wait for a twopenny bus to the bottom of Hampstead hill, then walk up and refresh himself with a distant view of nature, and rustic gambols with the donkey-boys on the greensward? Will he seek the calm of country and fresh air? Will he search for a lecture on ventilation, or just step into the next public-house, and wind up himself then and there with spirits? They give him a change at once. Nature avenges herself; she will not wait till the fields can be reached, or even the park, but turns up her little-finger with a quatern of gin. Drink, to most of our London poor, is play, amusement, recreation. They don't drink from thirst, like the sunburnt reaper, but to quicken their depressed spirits, to stir their languid pulse. Nature says, 'You need a change,' and they find it in drunkenness. When our philanthropists and pastors exert themselves to provide more play for the people, they will provide a wholesome answer to that demand which is now responded to by excessive drink.

I don't know which I pity most, the parents or the children of those poor families that live in London—the parents, I think. London children seem in their way as happy as the rosiest cubs in a hayfield; I mean those who are wisely permitted to play in the streets. This sounds shocking, but it is necessary; the only alternative being imprisonment in a stifling room. When out of school, children must run and tumble about; and if there are paving-stones outside the door instead of grass, on paving-stones they must tumble and romp. Children are simply unconscious of the most beautiful scenery, and its absence; they don't look far. The brat on the noblest beach, with picturesque cliffs, gorgeous sunsets, *ἀντίθετον γίλασμα*, the many-twinkling smile of ocean, and all the rest of it, makes a dirt-pie in the sand, and is only too happy if he can find some broken

lobster-shells or bits of tobacco-pipe to stick in it. Possibly, in time, he learns what he is expected to admire, and indulges the dirt-pie tendencies under the rose. On these grounds, I hold that the London urchin is as happy as the country one, though, with the usual perversity which sometimes begins to display itself even at that tender age, they mutually envy each other.

I am rather at a loss to say which the genuine old maid would like best, town or country; it must of course depend much on nephews, nieces, and popular preachers; but I am inclined to think that the country suits her least. Perhaps the small town is the thing, a cathedral town with little doing, out of the highway of the world, ventilated by no railway, with at least two local papers, and a successful dissenting chapel. That is the place for tea-fights, small confidential dinners, and high-pressure gossip. Old maids multiply in such an atmosphere: living is cheap, decent houses are to be had reasonably, shops are fair, news definite. There are suspicious, or rather suspected people enough to make a foil to the untouched; scandal sufficient to spice the taste of society, and whet the dry discourse. But Propriety outnumbers her opponents; old maids live there, and are happy. I know of a midland country town, not overlarge, retired, and conservative, where an inquiring friend of mine counted seventy.

One great advantage of dwelling in town is the appetite it gives you for the country. I am, though, ungracious enough sometimes to make dry faces over the tonic. The season is now past; down-trains are all full; London is 'empty'; there are not more than two millions and a quarter of people left. My hunger for green leaves is getting strong—I feel it now as I write. A shower has just fallen. I know how the light is glancing on the wet leaves in the wood, and how the woven patterns of sunshine lie upon the grass beneath the oaks. I see the rabbits flirting about in the field beside the spinny, I hear the partridge call her growing brood; but when I replace the image of my imagination by that which is actually before me, I behold a hot stuccoed house-front over the way, and hear a diseased hurdy-gurdy beneath my window. The iron hum of a large London street helps to fill my ears; a few rakish flies are trying unsuccessfully to find a hole in one of the panes, occasionally taking a little tour about the room, and then returning to their search full butt. It is not a country scene; it is worse, because it ought by rights and clock measurement to be evening—but only a second afternoon is come in its place, and the twilight will be dotted not by stars, but by the lamplighter. Is there ever any dew in London? Does it lie upon Pall Mall? Does it cool the Fig-tree Court? Does the spire of St Martin's glow in the early sunrise, while white mists roll off Trafalgar Square?

There is one matter in which London offers far greater facilities than the country—I mean the matter of housekeeping. Housewives can never really learn what housekeeping means in town. There is no difficulty in getting what you want at once; there is no necessity for calculations about the proportion of your stores, no obligatory provision. If you fail to lay in pickled walnuts at the critical moment when they are full grown, but may be easily pricked through with a pin—wise ladies will correct me if I am mistaken as to my test of fitness—if you miss the moment while the fruit is full, but not woody, you can buy them critically pickled. You need not know anything about the keeping of meat, the butcher takes this important care upon himself; the fillet of veal comes fit for the spit. Now, in the country, all joints must be 'hung' by the housekeeper, and cooked just before the decay which is shared by butcher's meat with nature begins to be felt. The country housekeeper knows that there is no more searching test of her skill than to be provided with an extra

dish, in case of a sudden increase in the number of the guests, and yet so watch the larder that no joint be 'turned.' In London, the barrenness, the unprovided emptiness of the larder, can be covered by a beef-steak fetched at the last moment from Mr Giblets—the joint is brought every day, fresh, but tender. This makes housekeeping, moreover, cheaper in town than in the country—greater sudden effects can be obtained with less expenditure. Again, people sometimes say: 'Oh, think of the abundance of fruit and vegetables you get from your own garden!' Abundance, no doubt, but how about the cost? You don't pay for the individual cabbage, you have no green-grocer's bill, but the gardener expects to be remunerated. Every home-grown radish is worth twice what the same simple vegetable would be in town, if you would but calculate its 'raising' fairly. You have abundant greens from your garden, but then remember that you are obliged to have them. You cannot economise in this point; you eat them because they are there, but you must pay to have them there whether you eat them or not. Depend upon it, there is no greater delusion than that about the produce of a garden. You get only what you want in town, paying for it at the time or afterwards. In the country, you spend money on the garden in advance, and then flatter yourself that the resulting fruit and vegetables are almost costless.

Then, again, in the country, you keep your pony-gig, perhaps your carriage. What does it cost? You can order it when you like, to be sure, without putting your hand immediately into your pocket. But take even a pony-gig—how many cabs could you have for the annual cost of that humble vehicle? To say nothing of the original outlay for the pony and the gig, you buy oats, carrots, hay, straw; you keep a groom or boy; you repair the stable; you want fresh harness; you have a bill from the blacksmith, the wheelwright, the farrier. The beast is lame when you want it most, or the shaft is broken, and you are obliged to send to the country town for a fly, in order that your wife may keep her engagement with a neighbour. How many cabs could you hire for the sum-total of those separate outlays? Depend upon it, you get more fun for your money in town. You can have a close-carriage at your door when you like, know no trouble about coachmen, and never unexpectedly find yourself the possessor of a dead horse. But you reply: There is the pleasure of looking after your nag and your garden. You take a pride, though it be small, in your horse; you look after your groom with much display of his profession; you converse with your gardener; you raise cucumbers with success, and melons without; you thin grapes, snipping away the whole morning—ay, and pleasant idle work it is, standing there in the sun, picturing to yourself what each bunch will grow to in the autumn, only you never thin them enough, you have not sufficient faith in their power of expansion; and so you fail, for the grapes, eventually, are not so very wonderful after all—rather sour, eh? and that when, unlike the fox, you have got them yourself. All this and more suggests pleasures which you cannot get in town. What interest do you feel in the cab-horse or hack? No friendly sensation of recognition comes over you when the cylindrical cucumber is laid on the table, or you recommend the pears. All this connection with the previous history of your dessert is impossible, when, as in London, your fruits and flowers have been brought by rail and wagon from sweltering steam-boats, and dead suburban flats, arranged as if for the very purpose of growing the most beautiful productions of nature under as ugly conditions as possible. There are no two trades more antagonistic than those of the landscape and the market gardener.

Again, let us to servants. Surely the lodgment and labour of London servants are much worse than those of their friends in the country. I don't of

course refer to Jeames; but I see the height of the houses; I know that those upper rooms are kept and cleaned; I know that the people who live in them ring bells, are waited on, want ever so much assistance in dressing, eating, and generally in dawdling through the day. I look at those upper windows, and see bars—ah! that is the nursery. I look down, and I see beneath my feet the sloping section of a kitchen; I can just catch the glow of the fire; I see stray knives and plates on a deal dresser; I see Mary Ann. Let me count. Reckoning two flights for each floor, she has one, that brings her up into the entrance-hall; one, two, first landing; three, drawing-room; four, five, ay, five flights at least, before she can turn the handle of the nursery-door—perhaps seven. Now, in the country, some twenty steps upward will take her from the kitchen to her charge. As with the nursery-maid, so with the parlour-maid; and yet these silly girls like to come up to London, and think they have risen in servanthood above their cousins when they descend to the cellars of Tyburnia. True, the nursery-maids take walks in the park, which their fellow-servants do not. They can get up races and regattas with perambulators, and smile under the glances of guardmen. Is not this better than to take the children out into the garden, and sew while they play; and, for a lover, to rely upon the awkward attempts of Hodge to conceal himself behind the water-butt? Upon my word, when one begins to think about it, and make light of the stairs, the nursery-maids have, perhaps, a more varied, easy life in town than in the country; but I pity cook and Hobe; though, if they prefer it, I don't see why I should affect any concern about them myself.

There is one undeniable advantage in London—undeniable, unless you are a brute—and that is the certainty of seeing all your friends. If you live in Cornwall, only the liveliest are likely to find you out; but all come up to town sooner or later. You can shew hospitality without being expected to entertain your guests. Let them come and go, at their own hours, and they will amuse themselves. I don't know which is most disagreeable—entertaining others, or being entertained one's self. Moreover, when your friends come up, you learn incidentally another feature of the cheapness of London. People say to you, you must dress so well there—it costs a fortune in clothes. All I can humbly urge is, that it need not. Those who know you, regard your person, not your suit—your heart, not your waistcoat. Those who don't know you, are hardly worth consulting. It is quite a mistake, believe me, about the additional expense of dress in town: middle-class people need not consider it at all.

Your country friends, moreover, shew you, by contrast, how you have overcome the natural tendency to buy things merely because they are pretty or cheap. A Londoner is not drawn aside by the temptations of the shops in Regent Street; he admires, it is true, but seldom feels a rabies to buy. Your country friend, on the contrary—who, be it observed, can often manage to muddle away good large sums down there at Green Slough Grange—is bewildered by the bargains which greet him. He discovers unsuspected wants; he has only passing opportunities for their gratification; he shall never see such a chance again. 'You,' says he, 'come by every day; I leave on Tuesday-week. I must get a few hundred yards of that garden-hose, and some vulcanised door-mats.' An odoriferous, bulky parcel blocks up your hall next day. You are serene and economical. It is the greatest mistake to suppose that 'things' cost the purchaser less because they are cheap. I do not refer to the supposed worthlessness of cheap goods, or try to shew that, in the long-run, you get more for your money than you would for a lesser outlay on a feebler article; I mean that, supposing the coveted objects equally good, whatever

the price, you spend less money when they are dear. You think twice, you go without. I wish to be understood as speaking of common superfluities. Cheap bread is a blessing; but there cannot be very much political or social advantage in most of the cheap patents we see advertised; the variety of ink-stands, for instance—perennial, fountain, pneumatic, &c. But I know people who never go to town without considerable expense in connection with these useless ingenuities. Your country people are always the most curious and enthusiastic about them, while the Londoner gets to feel such an inexhaustible confidence in the wit of the metropolis, that no invention takes him by surprise.

Meanwhile, let me remind you that the country-man does spend money—more, I believe, than his city friend in proportion to the results—when at home. If you were to shut him up in his paddock, he would make experiments in some dear newfangled manure over the hedge; but when he comes up to town, he yields to the influence which has hardened the Londoner.

On the whole, as I have said, I believe you get more fun for your money in London than elsewhere. You enjoy the country with a relish which no country-man feels; you choose your own society, and take the wall of a duke; but then you miss the sense of conservative possession which the permanent owner of even a small country-house is sure to feel. You attach no humbler household to your own; and, unless you be a professional visitor among them, the chances are you make no friends among the poor, which is one of the worst defects in the character of any man's society, not so much for the sake of the aid you can give them, as for the good they are able to do to you. There are obvious opportunities for genuine brotherly kindness in the country, which many indeed miss, but many improve. Among the blessings which accompany a quiet but comfortable home, away from the change and bustle of London, the sense of having made another man's hearth more happy, without destroying his self-respect, or exhibiting yourself as a benefactor, is not the least.

MYSELF AND MY RELATIVES.

CHAPTER XXX.

RAVENSHILL—TWO SURPRISES.

BRIGHTLY the spring sun was shining when I awoke next morning, gilding the crowd of evergreens, the tops of tall firs and stately elms that I beheld from my window. Although it was still early, I arose and dressed, for I was longing to run out and wander through shady walks among those leafy timber giants; and as soon as my toilet was completed, I slipped down stairs and opened the hall-door. What a fresh perfume blew round me as I emerged into the open air!—how peacefully the breeze still rustled and sighed through the trees! I heard the cawing of rooks, the twittering of a hundred sparrows, the chattering of magpies, mingling with the sweeter notes of the thrush, as I penetrated shadowy walks leading to romantic dells and grottoes. The very birds seemed tame, and a few that I saw hopping on the ground looked boldly at me, never flying away till I was quite near. As I advanced to less woody spots, I saw rabbits in great numbers darting here and there, while a squirrel amused me as it stood watching me from a neighbouring tree with earnest eyes. There was something in the solitude and retirement of the place peculiarly grateful after the bustle of life, the hurry and worry, the excitement of business and pleasure to be witnessed in the crowded haunts of the great city I had so lately quitted. Here I could almost fancy I was in the heart of some woody island, where the footsteps of man had rarely penetrated. After wandering for a long while,

I at length made my way back to the house. As I reached it, I beheld about a dozen poor women advancing towards me, each bearing a bright tin can: they were all neatly dressed, and from each one I received a curtsy as I passed them. I learned afterwards that these women were pensioners on Miss Milner's bounty. Breakfast was early; and Miss Milner told me she arose every morning at six o'clock, devoting an hour before coming down stairs to business matters—parish-school accounts, &c. After the morning-meal was concluded, she asked me to accompany her in a visit to Ravenshill, the neighbouring village. We did not go by the principal avenue, but started by a route through narrow pathways among trees, and by open glades and wide meadows, where sheep were feeding, going through rustic gates, and occasionally climbing over stiles. When we arrived at a sequestered spot, surrounded by many trees, where the gurgle of a waterfall sounded musically on the ear, Miss Milner stopped and drew a silver whistle from her pocket. 'Now I am going to surprise you,' she said laughing. 'Will you venture to use this whistle?'

I looked surprised indeed. 'And what will then be conjured up?' I asked, slightly puzzled.

'Give a good strong whistle,' said my companion, nodding her head and smiling still.

I blew the whistle with all my energy. There was soon a chattering of birds among the trees—a confused noise from the chirp of the woodpecker and robin, to the caw of the rook and cry of the wood-quail; and then, like magic, hundreds of these feathered creatures flew from the woods, gathering closely on the ground at our feet! Miss Milner, watching my astonishment with pleasure, now drew out a hitherto unobserved basket, and scattered crumbs of bread in all directions, while the birds hopped about, and ate without fear. Never had I felt more pleased than at this strange scene. 'I never allow a shot to be fired in my grounds,' said Miss Milner in answer to my wondering exclamations. 'These birds live in the woods here as unmolested as if they were on some desert spot undiscovered by man.'

'But then do they not destroy your fruit-gardens?' 'No—not more than elsewhere: we take precautions against them. But I would not destroy them. I look upon birds as one of the most exquisite creations. See how graceful their movements are!'

I was so much amused at the tameness of the birds, that I watched them for a long while. At length we pursued our way once more, and coming out upon the high-road, were soon in the beautiful valley where Ravenshill lay.

Never had I beheld so picturesque a village; its houses, though small, were like ornamental villas, neatly kept, and all in uniform. Gardens lay before every door, and many a young spring-flower was peeping up in those pretty spots. The little children playing outside doors arose from their stooping postures as we approached, and even the youngest of them dropped curtains of profound respect.

'Don't neglect to come to school to-day, Agnes,' said Miss Milner, tapping a curly-headed girl on the shoulder with her parasol. 'And you, Fanny Jones, must come earlier than you do in general, or I shall have to scratch your name from the doll-list before June.'

This terrible threat caused Fanny Jones, a wild-eyed girl of ten, to blush vividly, and droop her head in shame. Miss Milner then passed on till we arrived at a cottage, where she stopped, and my companion rapped gently at the door. A woman wearing a widow's cap opened it for us. 'How is Jane to-day?' asked Miss Milner, subduing her voice to a whisper.

'Bad enough, ma'am,' was the dejected reply.

'Can I see her?'

'O yes, ma'am, if you will condescend to walk into the parlour.'

We went in, and I saw a young woman of delicate appearance working embroidery in the window; her face bore all the traces of a fixed consumption. Miss Milner spoke kindly to her, and promised to send some preserves to her in the course of the day. I did not address any word to her, though I saw that she often looked at me with curiosity; but this did not surprise me, as I was a stranger there. When we left the house, Miss Milner related to me her history. 'That poor girl,' said she, 'married against her mother's wish about two years ago, and was altogether discarded by her family. Her husband was of very bad character, and at last abandoned her in London, after living with her scarcely six months. She was reduced to extreme poverty, endeavouring to support herself by needlework till ill health obliged her to give it up, and she then wrote to me to intercede for her with her mother. This I did, and Mrs Dibbsley agreed to take her home again. Poor thing, she is dying fast.' We pursued our way through the village, making calls at many cottages, hearing glad and sorrowful news by turns. At one house, a marriage was in contemplation; at another, a husband was laid up with a broken leg; at another, a little Tommy or Neddy was ill with whooping-cough; and another was full of rejoicing, because a letter had arrived from the absent soldier-son in a distant clime. Every one seemed eager to pour domestic tales into Miss Milner's ears, and I was not surprised to find her an object of love and veneration. Eccentric she may have certainly been in some things, yet she erred on the right side. If she was too benevolent, too kind to suit the requirements of our hard world, who can feel inclined to blame her? Not I, certainly.

We met Mr Vetchney, the rector of the parish, and he walked a little way with us. Miss Milner introduced me to him.

'Keppleton?' he repeated, on hearing my name. 'We are just very much interested, Miss Milner, in that name, curious to say, for I do not think it is a common one.'

'Yes, I know,' replied Miss Milner. 'Has our young friend arrived at the rectory yet?'

'Yes, he came this morning; and we have got some further proofs and papers of importance. It is quite certain the deeds were properly executed and registered.'

'Will you tell him to come over and dine with me at half-past six this evening?' said Miss Milner, who then whispered a few words in the clergyman's ear, at which he smiled pleasantly.

We stopped at one more cottage before returning to Ravenshill; it was not in the village, but in a retired little nook, nearly quite concealed by trees. A young nursemaid, with an infant in her arms, stood in the enclosure before the door.

'How is your mistress to-day, Janet?' asked Miss Milner.

'Very well, thank you, ma'am. Will you walk in and see her?'

'No, not to-day,' replied Miss Milner. 'Tell her I am glad to hear she is well.'

As we left the front of this tiny cottage, I turned to look back at it, and saw that a small white hand was quickly withdrawn from the muslin curtain, which it had held aside. 'Who lives there?' I inquired.

'A new tenant,' replied Miss Milner; and I thought a very faint colour stole over her face as she spoke, but it was only afterwards that I attached any importance to the circumstance.

'You will meet a person whom you knew before, this evening,' she said, after a pause.

'Who?' I naturally asked.

'Never mind who. But you need not dress for dinner, as we shall only be a trio.'

Situated as I was, I could not but feel agitated at the prospect of meeting any former acquaintance,

especially any one that I had ever known at Ripworth; and I had almost determined upon pleading illness as an excuse for not appearing at dinner at all, when I recollected that I had launched fairly upon a grade of life different to what I had formerly belonged, or seemed to belong to, and I might as well brave it out boldly.

I was changing my morning-dress for one more suitable for the evening, when a tap came to my bedroom door; a servant was outside with a note sealed in an envelope. The writing made me start. I opened it quickly and read:

'MY DEAREST JESSIE—I saw you this morning with Miss Milner outside this cottage. How glad I felt! My beloved sister, will you come and see me, if only for a quarter of an hour? I know I do not deserve such kindness, but it is in your nature to forgive. Come to-morrow—to-night, if you can. You will know the cottage I mean—the little one among the trees, where "Mrs Benson" lives. That is the name I have taken for the present, but Miss Milner knows my real one, though she has no idea I am your sister, nor will I ever tell her, if you do not wish it.'

'Your affectionate ANNA.'

I was much surprised at the contents of this note; indeed, I forgot that I should finish my toilet for dinner, instead of gazing at it with staring eyes, doubting and wondering. A feeling of relief was certainly in my heart; and when another tap came to the door to announce dinner, I started up, hurriedly brushed my hair, fastened my dress, and ran down stairs lighter of spirit than I had felt for a long time, though still filled with astonishment at the strange fact of my poor sister being in the neighbourhood of Ravenshill. On opening the drawing-room door, a fresh surprise awaited me—there, in the full glare of the waxlights, standing talking to Miss Milner, was Curzon Goad!

CHAPTER XXXI.

SOME DEEDS THAT AFFECT MY FAMILY.

He met me with *empressment*, but I felt too much agitated to trust my voice in speech. In what light he was to be regarded as yet, I knew not. Never before had I seen him look so well; his air was animated, his countenance quite radiant.

'You did not expect to see me this evening?' he said as he placed a chair for me.

'No, I wished to surprise her,' said Miss Milner, answering for me. 'I only told her she would see a person she had known before.'

'Our meeting here in this neighbourhood is in every way most strange, and yet most fortunate, just at present,' he said. 'Circumstances have brought to light the fact, that my uncle Newdegate's will, though quite a correct one, did not concern his entire property, as had been hitherto believed. Deeds had previously been made by him, unknown to his lawyer Huntley, making over one estate, the Shadows, to one person, and Harkslowe to another. These deeds have been registered properly in London, and'—

'Well, let us go to dinner, Mr Goad,' interrupted Miss Milner; 'we shall have the matter better explained afterwards.'

Now it struck me as singular enough that Mr Goad should all at once begin entertaining me, on this our first meeting after such a long parting, with an account of his deceased uncle's affairs, and I was half inclined to be satirical on the subject while going down to the dining-parlour. I soon discovered, however, that he had good reasons for thus opening the subject. I myself was deeply concerned in it; my whole family were concerned in it. To my utter astonishment, I learned that the Shadows—a property worth eight thousand a year—together with a sum of fifty thousand pounds, had been made over by deeds and documents duly signed and registered, by old Mr Newdegate, to Robert Keppleton of

Weston Cricket, in —shire, and to his children at his death! Mr Huntley, the lawyer of Mr Newdegate, was the person who first brought this matter to be investigated; he declared that on looking over some papers found in a secret drawer of an old desk at the Shadows, he discovered copies of the registered deeds, which led him to repair at once to London, and there he found the transfer of the property had been legally made. The deeds were drawn up by a notary of respectability, and the witnesses were Mr Vetchney, the present rector of Ravenshill, who was then a curate in the neighbourhood of the Shadows, and some other individuals, one among them being James Grubb, carpenter, our landlord in London! The estate of Harkslowe—a property worth about four thousand a year—had in the same way, and at the same time, been made over, with all its appurtenances, to Curzon Goad. After this disposal of his estates, Mr Newdegate had made a will, in which he stated that he left all his 'property, not otherwise disposed of,' to Lucien Legrand, who was appointed residuary legatee. It will be remembered that in that will Curzon Goad had merely been bequeathed seven thousand pounds. Why the eccentric old man had thus arranged matters, none could tell; but suspicion was afloat that both Legrand and Huntley must have been aware of his intentions, and yet if so, why had Huntley spoken the truth at last? Curzon Goad and Miss Milner wondered much at this; but, like lightning, a solution of the mystery flashed upon myself. I was told that Mr Vetchney and the lawyer in London who executed the deeds for Mr Newdegate had interested themselves much about the business, and having only lately discovered that the affair was really of importance, had written to Mr Horne at Weston Cricket, to discover where my father and his family were. A reply had arrived, stating that we had repaired to London, but that our address was unknown to Mr Horne. Thus matters had stood when Curzon Goad and I unexpectedly met that evening. He told me that the war having been hastily concluded in India, he had joined the *dépôt* of his regiment at Chatham, on his return home, having received a slight wound during the hostilities abroad.

'My dear child,' said Miss Milner to me, 'all this account of deeds and transfers may be very exciting, but do not buoy yourself up too much. There will be a hundred things to prove Mr Newdegate insane or doting at the time the deeds were executed.'

'If so, then he must have been as insane when he made his will,' replied Curzon; 'and as I am his sole heir-at-law, his property would in that case all be mine. It will be better for Legrand to submit quietly to give up the estates than lose everything. By the will, he was left about ten thousand pounds. As for myself, I am convinced my uncle had sufficient reason for his disposal of the Shadows. You are aware, of course, Miss Keppleton, that he was bequeathed the estate by your grandfather, Horace Keppleton, and that he wished to restore it to your father, whom, it seems, he considered had been defrauded of it?'

'I know nothing of the matter,' said I, ashamed of knowing so little of my father's affairs. 'I never heard my father allude to Mr Newdegate or the Shadows in any way. He has been ill for two years, but accounts from his physician say he is now much better, and most probably he would be able himself to state what he knew of his family affairs.'

Distinctly to my memory now arose the story papa told me when I was a child, at the humble fireside of our little parlour at Weston Cricket—the story I have detailed at full length in the first part of this record; and quite as distinctly came back the scene in the dim sitting-room of our lodging in London years ago, when the strangely withered, dwarfish man incurred my father's displeasure for intruding upon us the last day of his stay in the city. Ah, if papa had not been so rude and hasty that day! Mr Goad left Ravenshill

at about eleven o'clock, and I soon hastened to my room, to consider what course I should pursue with regard to my sister Anna.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ANNA'S ADVENTURES.

Early the following morning, I hastened from the house alone, and taking the same route as Miss Milner had chosen the day before, hurried to the little sequestered cottage which I surmised was the one where Anna was living. On applying for admittance, and giving my name to the girl who opened the door, I was at once ushered into a prettily furnished apartment. All looked neat and tidy, even elegant. I had not sat long there, when a slight rustling was heard, a light step approaching. In a moment, my sister was in my arms. Neither of us could speak for some minutes, so great was the emotion on both sides. I dreaded to hear the story she must have to tell; I dared not ask a question.

'My dear, dear Jessie,' she said at length, 'how does it happen that you are here at Ravenshill?'

'I shall explain that to you by and by,' I replied; 'and, in the meantime, you can tell me how it is that you are staying here.'

'It was very good of you to come to me,' she said, in a slightly dejected voice, for, in spite of myself, I fear my tone and manner were cold. 'Ah, Jessie, it was cruel of you never to write to me all these long months! How many letters I wrote without receiving a single answer!'

'Letters, my dear Anna? We never received a line from you!' I exclaimed.

'I wrote to Weston Cricket and to Ripworth,' she continued, 'and never got an acknowledgment of even one letter. Had they miscarried, I should have got my own letters back, for my address was always given plainly inside.'

'You may believe me, Anna,' I replied; 'your letters never reached us. We never heard of you, from the day you quitted home, for a whole year—never knew what became of you; all was merely conjecture, even up to this day.'

'My letters must not have been posted, then,' said Anna, while a flush overspread her face. 'I can understand it now. And did you and mamma never know that I married Mr Huntley, who had come for a short time to Weston Cricket?'

'No,' said I, heaving a sigh of relief; 'we could only surmise that you had left home with him; we could find no proof of it.'

'If I have caused much grief at home, Jessie, I have not gone unpunished for it,' she said in a trembling voice. 'Why Mr Huntley wished to marry me, I cannot imagine, for though his professions of love seemed most ardent before we were married, his cruelty to me afterwards surpassed belief. What I have gone through since I put myself in his power none can guess!'

My sister's agitation now became so extreme that she could not speak for some moments. When she was calmer, I asked her to give me an account of what had occurred since she left Weston Cricket. I give the substance of her narration in my own words. The winter of my absence at Ripworth had passed very drearily, as the reader already knows, to my family at the cottage, and Anna felt most unhappy. Discomfort reigned at home; her brothers were discontented; her mother so harassed by cares as to become a more gloomy companion than ever; Rosa was confined to bed from illness, caught by want of proper fires—perhaps even of wholesome food. In January, a strange gentleman appeared at Weston Cricket; report declared him to be a man of large fortune, wishing to purchase the old Park; he remained for some weeks at Farnley, frequently appearing at

the church of Weston Cricket, and sitting in our pew, as Anna was the only member of our family who at that time went to church. Like many young girls, my sister was vain and fond of admiration; she knew she was beautiful, and it did not surprise her that a gentleman, however rich or grand, should fall in love with her from merely seeing her at church. Through the instrumentality of Rachel the servant, a correspondence commenced. Mr Huntley declared his love, and, blinded by romance and vanity, Anna put faith in his professions. She believed him to be rich, and thought it would be well for herself and her family if she married him. For sundry given reasons, which imposed upon a girl—scarcely sixteen—he wished her to keep the matter secret: if she loved him enough to trust him, she must flee with him to Scotland, and be married there, as she was not of age; otherwise, they must part for ever.

They were married in Scotland first, and afterwards in London. Anna soon discovered that her husband treated her rather like a child than a grown-up person; he kept constant surveillance over her; and she even suspected that the servant whom he hired to wait upon her was a sort of spy. She begged him to let her write home, and he gave her permission: but she now concluded that the letters were not posted; he had probably intercepted them. At last she wrote no more, considering that her family had discarded her. They soon went to the Shadows, which she described as the most gloomy of houses, and there she lived without a creature to speak to but Bess Burritt, her servant, an elderly woman with a bad countenance and disagreeable manner, whom she was much afraid of. Mr Huntley was frequently from home, and when he did stay there, his ill-humour and violence caused her much misery. She learned that he had not any property like what she had believed him possessed of; he was merely agent for Mr Legrand, the proprietor of the Shadows. This revelation may have embittered Anna's mind; she may have betrayed her disappointment in a way that provoked her husband; however it was, they lived together most unhappily.

Mr Legrand once or twice went to the Shadows to receive rents, and she was aware that he and Huntley were not on good terms. She often heard them talking together in a manner that proved it. There seemed to be some doubt whether Mr Legrand had legal possession of the estate. She heard him declare her husband to be a 'traitor,' and that he would ruin him yet. Upon one occasion, Huntley had returned home evidently intoxicated—he was in a fearful temper. Anna was hasty and imprudent—they quarrelled, and he struck her! This was the climax. My sister, in her indignation, determined to leave him—she cared not if it were to beg. Her life at the Shadows was unbearable, and she neither loved nor respected the man she had married. It often had occurred to her that he might find nefarious means of ridding himself of her in that lonely old house. Such things had happened; and they might happen again. A man capable of such cruelty as he exercised towards her, might execute any crime. One evening, when Huntley was away, and Bess Burritt absent, as she usually was, upon a gossiping expedition, Anna made a small bundle of a few clothes, and assuming the same peasant's dress that she had worn upon leaving Weston Cricket, she hurried from the house, and running through tangled woods, climbed a half-broken-down wall to the high-road. It was a dark December evening; the roads were dry, the air mild. She had three sovereigns in her possession and a few shillings. Knowing that the mail-coach for London passed that way every evening, she waited on the road till it came up, and hailing the guard, took her place on it as an outside passenger. It was early in the morning when she got to London, the stars and moon had not long disappeared; and there,

in the vast city, she found herself, a friendless young woman, in a delicate state of health, with very little money, and no probability of getting more.

She took a lodging in a very poor house somewhere in the vicinity of St Martin's Lane, having only one room, barely furnished, and here became acquainted with a fellow-lodger, a young woman supporting herself by needlework, whose husband had abandoned her. This person was Mrs Dibbsley's daughter, whom I had seen the day before at Ravenshill. She was very kind to Anna. Misfortune was the tie that bound them in friendship, and for some time they sewed together, earning each a few pence a day, scarcely enough to keep them from starvation. In the midst of her poverty and privation, my sister's child was born. The landlady was kind to her in her time of need, but her hardship was great. Often, when returning home in the dark winter evenings with her infant in her arms, after leaving some piece of needlework with the owner, she felt inclined to wish that death would release her and her child from a life of wretchedness. Her fellow-lodger, Jane Hart, was rapidly growing so ill that she found it impossible to support herself by her needle any longer. In her despair, she wrote to Miss Milner at Ravenshill, whom she described to Anna as the most benevolent of women. This lady happened to be in London at the latter end of the winter, and she called to see Jane, who mentioned to her the distressed condition of my sister. Miss Milner questioned Anna pretty closely about her circumstances, and at length she confided to her the truth, stating even the name of her husband, and how she had been induced to leave her home; but she did not mention her own family name. Miss Milner became interested in her story, and at once promised her assistance, but counselled her to return to her husband, or at least to communicate with him. My sister firmly declared she never could bring herself to live with him again; and seeing her so determined, Miss Milner consulted Mr Vetchney, the clergyman, who was well acquainted with the neighbourhood of the Shadows, and he found means of discovering that Anna's story was correct, and that she had but too good reasons for leaving her husband, whose character was well known to those with whom he had dealings. Mr Vetchney and Mr Goad happened to be at that time in London on business connected with the disposal of old Mr Newdegate's property, and both of them became interested in the account given of Mrs Huntley by Miss Milner, who, having formerly been a particular friend of Curzon Goad's mother, was intimate with him. She frequently employed him to execute commissions in town for her; and it was while escorting my sister, at Miss Milner's request, one evening, from her house to the lodgings she had procured for her in a quiet part of the city, that my brother Edward observed her in his company. The advertisement which I had addressed to Anna in the *Times* was supposed by her and Miss Milner to have been inserted in the paper by Mr Huntley, and under this mistake she answered it. She also imagined that Edward, when endeavouring to force admittance to her lodging, was an emissary of her husband. After this supposition, she left the house, and Miss Milner took her to live with her for a few weeks in St James's Street, generally accompanying her herself when she went out in town, and both being often escorted by either Mr Vetchney or Curzon Goad, who always communicated to Miss Milner what progress was being made in the discovery of documents touching the rightful possession of the Shadows and Harkslowe estates. In April, Anna was permitted by Miss Milner to take up her residence for a time at a vacant cottage near Ravenshill, and thus she disappeared from London. Such was the sketch of her adventures since eloping from Weston Cricket. In turn, I gave

her a rapid account of what had befallen myself and our family within the past sixteen months; but for the present I forbore to mention to her that an unexpected turn of good-fortune seemed about to visit us, and that Mr Huntley had had probably very substantial reasons for wishing to make her his wife.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IN WHICH A WEDDING IS IN CONTEMPLATION.

I confided everything to Miss Milner respecting my sister, who was thereupon allowed to come and stay with us at Ravenshill; the baby came too—a fine sturdy little fellow, whom Anna considered to resemble every member of her own family. Of course I lost no time in writing to my dear mother; and such was the kindness of our hostess, that she desired me to invite her to join our circle in the country, where we could all await the result of the investigation concerning Mr Newdegate's affairs. In about a week, mamma, then, arrived at Ravenshill. Nothing could exceed Miss Milner's good-nature to us all; in every way she endeavoured to render our stay with her happy. Mr Legrand, having found that he would only be a loser by entering into a lawsuit respecting the estates for so short a time in his possession, was obliged to submit to their restoration to the real owners. It was done very quietly, the affair scarcely getting into the newspapers. Whether Mr Legrand and his late friend Huntley were all along aware of the real state of affairs, none could positively say; but from the fact of certain papers having disappeared from Mr Newdegate's desk after his death, and from the circumstance of Huntley's eloping with my sister so shortly afterwards, no doubt could be entertained that one or other, if not both, was aware of the old man's intentions. Had I not overheard some conversation between Legrand and my uncle as I stood in the dead of night outside the library door at Ripworth, which seemed to concern people of the name of Keppleton—a secret too? Had my uncle Daubeny known all along that his sister and her children were to be one day as wealthy as himself—perhaps more wealthy—and was that the reason I was asked to Ripworth, and treated kindly there, till affairs went against us, and Mr Legrand was considered Bermingham Newdegate's heir? While we were still at Ravenshill, a letter from Colonel Daubeny reached mamma, congratulating her most heartily upon her unexpected good-fortune, and hoping that I had forgiven him for his hasty fit of anger, which he assured her he had long ago repented of! To my surprise, mamma put the letter in the fire immediately on reading it. Soon afterwards, we learned that the colonel was terribly involved with Mr Legrand; he owed him a vast sum of money—and what was still more shocking, it was discovered that he had taken up nearly all his stepdaughter's fortune, of which he had been sole guardian, to pay pressing debts. The final was, that he suddenly quitted England for the continent.

Arrangements have been made for a separation between my poor sister and Mr Huntley. He has produced various private papers, which he pretended to have found in the old desk at the Shadows: among them was a journal kept up to within a month of the old man's death, in which Curzon Goad was mentioned to the last with the greatest affection, and no allusion whatever was made to any dishonourable proceeding of his grand-nephew. There was also a long account, in the old man's writing, of his reasons for making over the estate of the Shadows to Robert Keppleton.

Among all the circumstances that I had reason to be thankful for, the most important to me by far were those which led me to believe Curzon Goad perfectly undeserving of the malicious imputations cast upon his character. According to my mother's wish,

my father was removed from Dr Dirckroft's care, and brought to the Shadows—his childhood's home. His malady had abated much, and hopes are entertained of his ultimate restoration to health of mind and body, for both had succumbed under the weight of family cares and difficulties. He understands perfectly that he has been restored to the estates of his ancestors; he remembers the room where his father died; and he has shewed me spots in the old neglected pleasure-grounds where he played hide-and-seek, long years ago, with his young companions, tenants' sons on the property. There is one thing remarkable: he has never asked for my sister Rosa; and once, when her name was inadvertently mentioned in his hearing, he raised his hands to his face, and covered it for some minutes. Full well he knows she is gone to her eternal home. Beloved sister, in the depth of night how often do my thoughts wander to your quiet grave in the churchyard at Weston Cricket!

I have still a strange circumstance to relate. My father has declared that Lucien Legrand was formerly a brother-officer of his own in the Austrian regiment to which he belonged, and that he behaved shamefully to him. They quarrelled one night in a café, and my father struck him with a knife. For a long while he supposed him to have been killed; but he heard, after some years, that he had come into possession of a large property in England.

How glad I felt, then, that I had not married that man!

There is to be a quiet wedding soon at Weston Cricket, in the simple country church, and Mr Horne, assisted by Mr Vetchney, is to be the officiating clergyman. It is my wish to be married there, where I first beheld my husband. Greatly are we both altered within the last few years—sobered, subdued, and understanding that errors must needs bring their own punishment. We have both done wrong; who has not? But we hope to pursue our onward path together, not unblesed.

END OF MYSELF AND MY RELATIVES.

BLOWN THROUGH A TUBE

So far as we are aware, no human being was ever blown through a tube until this present year eighteen hundred and sixty-one. Men have worked their way through tubes in many other modes: the elder Brunel, for instance, through his big tube, the Thames Tunnel, under circumstances of great and varied difficulty; and his son, the Brunel of the Broad Gauge and the *Great Eastern*, through the tube which bears the name of the Box Tunnel. Robert Stephenson was one of the first to walk through the mighty tube of the Britannia Bridge over the Menai; the Prince of Wales rode through the still mightier tube forming the Victoria Bridge at Montreal; water-work labourers and gas-work labourers are often required to crawl through iron pipes of sufficient diameter; Sir William Herschel's family walked through the tube of his majestic reflecting telescope at Slough. These, and other examples, are more or less familiar to all of us; but the being blown through a tube is something different.

It is of the *Pneumatic Dispatch* tube we are speaking—a tube which may one day convey our letters and parcels from one end of the metropolis to the other, and, for aught we can tell, all other commodities except meat—which, as is well known, should not be 'blown.'

Those who regard this subject as a matter of mechanical science are aware that compressed and expanded air have both been experimented on, many times in past years, as motive-powers. Papin, the French engineer, more than two hundred years ago, conceived the idea of producing motion by atmospheric pressure through a tube; but he did not

pursue the subject practically. About half a century ago, Mr Medhurst published a short account of a scheme, under the title, *A New Method of Conveying Letters and Goods by Air*. The public, as may be supposed, regarded him as a dreamer. Many years afterwards, he published another pamphlet—*A New System of Inland Conveyance for Goods and Passengers*. From this it appears that he had formed a plan, of which the following is an outline. In the first place, an air-tight tunnel was to be constructed, of sufficient magnitude to admit the passage of carriages within it. The carriages, running upon rails, were to be so formed as exactly to fit the tunnel, or at least to have around them only so much space as to permit them to pass through it without friction. They were to be propelled by compressed air, which would push them on because it could not find a passage around them. The air was to be forced in by pumping-machinery. Another arrangement planned by Medhurst was that of causing carriages to run through a tunnel, not by compressing air behind them, but by exhausting the air in front of them. This is worthy of being recorded, for it is just the principle now proposed to be adopted by the Pneumatic Dispatch Company. A third scheme suggested by this ingenious man was this: There was to be a small tunnel or large tube, containing a piston-carriage for the conveyance of goods, and a valve along the top of the tube, through which a rod would protrude vertically. The rod would be connected at the lower end with the piston-carriage inside the tube, and at the upper end with a passenger-carriage in the open air: this passenger-carriage would run upon a railway either above or alongside of the tube. By this singular arrangement, compressed air would not only blow along a goods-carriage inside the tube, but also a passenger-carriage outside and above it. Even this did not exhaust Medhurst's inventions. He planned the construction of a railway, in the centre of which would be laid a small tube, having a valve and upright bar as above described. This was a cheaper arrangement, as the tube was only to be large enough to contain a piston, not a goods-carriage. He contrived various ingenious modes of closing the valve at all times, except just at the instant when the carriage would pass. Medhurst appears to have relied more on a *plenum* behind the piston, than on a *vacuum* in front of it; and he certainly formed very magnificent ideas of the degree of propulsive power thus obtainable—much more so than would now be admitted. He believed that in a tunnel of thirty square feet sectional area, or between five and six feet in diameter, carriages might be propelled at the rate of *sixty miles an hour* without the condensation of air becoming uncomfortable to the passengers.

If ever the Pneumatic Dispatch scheme becomes really effective and profitable, society must say a good word for Mr Medhurst: he certainly set the brains of other men to work, although he did not himself profit by his various tubular schemes. The same, in a smaller degree, may be said of Mr Vallance, who, in 1823, invited the public to consider a new mode of travelling. His design was for conveying passengers along a railway laid within an air-tight tunnel, made either of cast iron or of vitrified clay. Knowing that experiments had shewn a very great loss of power to result from the attempt to impel air through a long pipe, he selected the vacuum instead of the *plenum* method—exhausting the air in front of the piston, and allowing the ordinary atmosphere to press on the piston from behind. The possibility of doing this was actually shewn on a small scale at Brighton; and thus Vallance made a step in advance beyond Medhurst; but people laughed at him, and the improbability of true-born Britons ever consenting to be shot through a tube like pellets through a popgun.

Years rolled on, and then came Mr Pinkus from America, with his patent '*Pneumatic Railway*.' This was an iron tube about three feet in diameter, with

a longitudinal slit, an inch or two wide, on its upper side. Two raised edges on the sides of this slit formed a trough, which was filled up with a valvular cord of some spongy or yielding substance, strengthened by a backing of iron. A piston travelled within the tube, and a bar, passing upward from it through the slit, connected it with one of a train of carriages running on a railway. In fact, it was one of Medhurst's plans, greatly modified in relation to the mode of sealing up the opening except at the moment when the piston was passing a particular spot. A small bit of experimental railway was laid down, and Pinkus's apparatus tried on it; but, somehow or other, the affair went out of public thought, and Mr Pinkus made nothing by his ingenuity.

Again we pass over a few years, and come to the labours of Messrs Clegg and Samuda, who, in 1840, announced to the world their 'Atmospheric Railway.' This really did 'come to something,' though the 'something' was financially unfortunate to a good many people. Half a mile of the new apparatus was laid down upon the West London Railway; and it worked so successfully, that the attention of railway companies was attracted towards it. We need not enter into mechanical detail. We have simply to picture to ourselves a cast-iron tube about half a yard in diameter—a slit along the top of that tube—an elastic valve or flap closing the slit—an upright bar forcing for itself a passage by lifting up the valve a few inches at a time—a piston at the bottom of the bar, within the tube—a carriage at the top of the bar, outside the tube—a train connected with this carriage—and apparatus for pumping out the air in front of the piston in the tube. Such was the atmospheric railway, which was actually put in operation on the Croydon, the Dublin and Kingstown, and the South Devon Railways. It was really a wonderful thing, for a velocity of sixty miles an hour was occasionally obtained; and the train seemed to be driven along by invisible agency, no outward propulsive agent of any kind being present. Nevertheless, it failed commercially; the expense of working was greater than that of the locomotive system, chiefly owing to the endless difficulty of maintaining the valve air-tight.

The reader must take all this as an exemplification of the well-known truth, that 'there is nothing new under the sun.' The Pneumatic Dispatch plan of the present day is not new; it is only an improvement upon something which had long before taxed the speculative faculties of ingenious men.

In a district once forming part of Battersea Fields, but now a newly laid out wharf and quay belonging to the Vauxhall Water-works Company, is temporarily laid a serpentine pipe about a quarter of a mile in length. It is mostly on the surface of the ground, but in some parts either supported above it or slightly buried beneath it; there are one or two sharp curves in it, and gradients almost as steep as that of Holborn Hill. At one end is a small train of iron carriages; at the other end, an engine-house with a steam-engine and an air-pump. The pipe is about thirty inches in internal diameter, and having in section a form something like that of a bee-hive. It is made in pieces, so luted together as to be air-tight from end to end. Such is the tube. The carriages bear some resemblance to cradles or cots, having a vertical section exactly like that of the tube, but slightly smaller, and being open at the top except at and near the two ends. Each carriage is about seven feet long, and is very strongly made of iron; four wheels allow it to run on a miniature railway within the tube. Here, then, we have a railway within a tube, and a train of two or more iron carriages to travel upon it. Next for the motive-power. At the other end of the tube is a small temporary engine-house with machinery. A steam-engine causes a very large vertical disc or wheel, more than twenty feet in diameter, to rotate rapidly. The disc is formed of sheet-iron, shaped

like two gigantic watch-glasses, placed with their concave faces inwards, and meeting at their edges within an inch or so; the hollow axis of this disc is connected with one end of the tube. When the disc rotates rapidly, air is driven off forcibly from between the two surfaces by a sort of centrifugal action; and this gives rise to a species of suction by which a vast body of air is withdrawn from the tube. If the remote end of the tube were quite closed, this suction would go on until almost a vacuum was produced; but if it were only closed by an iron carriage which leaves a little margin all round, the vacuum would be very partial. Partial as it is, however, the vacuum is sufficient to give rise to a very rapid movement of the carriage through the tube. There being rarefied air in front, and the ordinary atmospheric air behind, the carriage is driven forward by a force depending on the difference between the two, and this force is much more considerable than might be supposed. A train of two carriages, each weighing seven or eight hundred pounds, is driven through the quarter mile of tube in thirty or forty seconds—equal to a speed varying from twenty to thirty miles an hour. A visitor to this experimental-ground is shown how these carriages, laden with several hundredweights of bags of stones, to represent merchandise or parcels, are shot through the tube; over and over again it is shewn that the formidable mass is driven along the quarter of a mile in a fraction of a minute. But if an adventurous individual chooses to make a more personal trial of this extraordinary mode of travelling, Mr Latimer Clark and Mr Rammill, the *genii loci*, offer no objection, but rather try to make him as comfortable as possible. One of the carriages is emptied of its bags of stones, and a clean mattress is substituted for them. The traveller lies down in his iron cot, and is covered with a rug, to shield his clothes from dust. Earnest warnings are administered to him that he must not raise his head, lest awful consequences should follow. He waits in quiet expectation, wondering what sort of a life it must be to travel through an iron pipe, and whether he will come out at the other end like a shot from an Armstrong gun. The attendant pushes the carriage or cot into the mouth of the tube, and then all is darkness; all is very hot, too, on an August day. Presently, as if some invisible hand were pushing behind, the cot begins to move; and then ensues such a buzz, hum, whiz, rattle, and rumble, as he could not describe if ever so much a master of language. Off he goes, down the incline which is to imitate Holborn Hill, up the incline imitative of Skinner Street, and round corners of various degrees of radius. Knowing that the tip of his nose is not very far distant from the roof of the tube, he remains quiet and cautious, hoping for the best, and trusting that his dark progress through infinite space will end somewhere or other in daylight, and terra firma. At last he hears a bang; he does not know it at the time, but this is the bursting open of a valve or door at the further end of the tube; and out he is shot into the light of day—safe and sound, though a little bewildered at his very strange journey. So nicely are the adjustments made, that the carriage comes to a stand within a very few feet from the mouth of the tube; indeed, if this were not the case, carriage, man, and all would plunge headlong into the Thames.

This great tube is a model of one which is proposed to be laid down beneath some of the streets of London. We have the postmen to deliver letters, the railway carts and the parcel delivery carts to deliver parcels, and the overhouse telegraph to deliver messages; but we seem to want something more than all these. A quick transmission of mail-bags between St Martin's le Grand and the several central district offices, is felt to be a great desideratum; as well as between the chief office and the several railway termini. But this is only one part of the service

proposed to be rendered by the Pneumatic Dispatch Company. It is now several years since the Electric and International Telegraph Company caused a tube to be laid down from their stations in Cornhill and at the Stock Exchange to the station in the Lothbury. Instead of having the trouble of transcribing the messages, and sending them by hand, the slips of paper were themselves put into the tube, and blown along in about thirty seconds. The plan answered so well, that other pipes have since been laid down; and the four stations at Cornhill, Stock Exchange, Mincing Lane, and Lothbury, are placed in communication with a central station in Moorgate Street, to which strips of paper are blown containing messages to be transmitted to all parts of the world. It is a small beginning, but it promises well. The dispatches are placed in a small cylinder roughly surrounded by felt; and this cylinder obviously represents the iron carriage of the larger apparatus. The tubes are small; but those necessary for the mail-and-parcel dispatch would be larger. Besides the conveyance of bags of letters through various districts of London, as just mentioned, the Company propose to carry small parcels to and from the several railway stations in alliance with the railway companies; and to convey professional, commercial, official, and private documents and papers of all kinds, as well as newspapers and books, from office to office, combined with a hand-delivery to the consignees. The Company propose also that the government should have a complete series of tubes for special and separate use, to convey the almost numberless messages and papers which have every day to travel between the several government offices at Whitehall, Somerset House, Pall Mall, and Victoria Street. The Admiralty alone would save a very large sum every year by getting rid of the difficulty occasioned by one-half of every day's business being transacted at Whitehall, and the other half at Somerset House.

The future must tell its own tale. It would not be wise to predict too warmly; but if this scheme once surmounts preliminary difficulties, and becomes effective, there is no calculating the amount of commercial and social advantage that may attend its adoption. Steam-pressure and water-pressure are working busily for us every day; perhaps air-pressure will shortly join the goodly company.

THE SHIP OF THE DESERT.

THE camel, whose area of servitude extends over a wide range, embracing Arabia, India, Persia, South Tartary, the Canary Islands, and a large portion of Africa, unlike the rest of man's four-footed friends and servants, seems to be a total stranger to the pleasures of freedom. That such was not always the case is certain enough, without the evidence of the fossil remains lying in the British Museum, which were discovered by Colonel Cautley and Dr Falconer in the sub-Himalayan hills. The natives of Central Africa persist in asserting that wild camels still wander among the unfrequented mountain-ranges of that continent; but as no European traveller has yet set eyes upon them, their existence is too apocryphal to overthrow the prevailing opinion, that in the present day the camel exists only in a state of slavery.

At what era men first enlisted the camel into their service, it is impossible to guess; but that it was at a very early period is plain from the fact, that six thousand camels formed part of the wealth with which the patient Patriarch was rewarded after his terrible trial. From the East, the useful beast found its way to Europe. In the sixth century, the treasure of Mumolus was carried by its means from Bordeaux to Convenues; and when Clotair made Brunichild a prisoner, he ordered her to be carried through the army on camel-back, before she was handed over to the executioner. The Moors during

their rule in Granada introduced the camel into Spain; but the East was always the real land of camels, the peculiarities of the animal being especially adapted for the vast deserts for which that quarter of the globe is famous.

To carry men and merchandise across the arid waste, an animal was needed at once speedy, untiring, sure-footed, and capable of subsisting where vegetation was scanty, and water scarce: all these qualifications are combined in the camel. The pads of its spreading feet, divided into two toes without being externally separated, prevent it sinking in the sand, over which it moves so noiselessly, that it has been poetically and appropriately termed 'the ship of the desert.' The callosities on the flexures of the limbs and chest, upon which the animal rests as it kneels to receive its load, prevent the skin from cracking from contact with the hot sand. The nostrils closing at will, exclude the burning grains when the simoom sweeps across the desert; while the peculiar construction of the stomach enables the camel to go without water for seven, or even, in extreme cases, as many as fifteen days, and even to be the salvation of a thirsty caravan. In the latter case, the poor beast is sacrificed, his stomach opened, and the contents strained through a cloth. He is apt to drink greedily after a long abstinence, but in the seasons when the dew falls, hardly cares to drink at all. He is as easily satisfied in the way of eating, delighting in the tough plants he passes on his march, which his strong nipper-like teeth enable him to masticate with comfort. These good qualities are not, however, unalloyed. The camel is liable to slip in sloppy places, and disjoint his hips; bears cold and wet weather but ill; and has so little recuperative power, that, when knocked up, he generally succumbs altogether, and is left to the jackal and vulture. Even if he should recover, he becomes a poor weak object, piteous to behold, a burden to himself, and of little use to his master. Although the camel is a teetotaller, he sometimes gets intoxicated by indulging in dates after drinking, when fermentation takes place in the stomach. Another peculiarity of the living ship no traveller can speak of with patience, while he emphatically endorses the advice of one who writes: 'In hot weather, pitch your tent as far from your camels as you dare, and if there be a breeze, to the windward.'

The amble of the camel—a curious amalgamation of rolling and pitching simultaneously executed—would scarcely be extolled by any one accustomed to the pleasant canter of a good horse; but it has its advantages. The rider may sit sideways, backwards, or in the orthodox fashion, with his feet in or out of the stirrups; he may let his legs dangle carelessly, or sit cross-legged after the manner of Turks and tailors, without any fear of his seat or equanimity being disturbed by the sure-footed beast stumbling, kicking, shying, or bolting. He is, however, guilty of something like the last-mentioned fault upon nearing water after long abstinence; and when a caravan makes a rush for the wells, it behoves the human portion of it to look to their legs. Another habit rather perplexing to the inexperienced camel-rider, is the animal's propensity for snatching at dwarf acacias and other vegetable delicacies as he marches along. But these slight drawbacks are fully compensated by the measured regularity with which he moves; while the elevation enables the traveller to see all that is to be seen, and gives him the benefit of every welcome breeze that blows.

The riding-gear of the dromedary consists of a large double pad of goats-hair cloth, stuffed with grass or straw. This is thrown over the back of the animal. A wooden frame of flat sticks, united into a pair of conical pommels six or eight feet high, is placed on the pad, into which it settles itself comfortably, the hump of the camel forming the centre of the apparatus, and keeping everything in its proper place. Across this

gigantic saddle the saddle-bags are thrown, and the whole covered with carpets and cushions, until a sort of pyramid is formed, upon the apex of which the traveller is perched; his water-bottles, carpet-bag, and other paraphernalia swinging below. The harness is completed by a halter of goat and camel hair twisted together passing round the beast's nose like our common stable-halter.

When the sex dare the dangers of a desert-ride, they generally mount as English ladies used to do before the advent of Anne of Bohemia and the side-saddles; should they scruple at acting in so gentlemanly a manner, they can choose between the shireeyeh, moosultah, mahassa, and takht'-rawan. The first named is a species of platform, built up with mattresses, carpets, and cushions, on a foundation of luggage-chests. The moosultah is composed of a couple of frames—resembling in shape two old-fashioned high-backed chairs minus the seats—hung across the pack-saddle. Inside these frames the fair travellers seat themselves, and are screened from sun and wind by an awning supported by poles and the backs of the frames. The mahassa is an improvement on the moosultah. It consists of a pair of frames, or rather boxes, four or five feet long, two feet wide, and one foot and a half deep, with posts fixed at the outer corners; these boxes are hung across the pack-saddle, and the whole covered with a showy awning, supported by the posts at the corners, and another in the centre. If there is only one passenger, of course it is necessary that something of equal weight must be placed in the unoccupied compartment, to preserve the balance. The most luxurious of all the accommodations for the tender portion of creation is the camel-litter or takht'-rawan, which bears some resemblance to the body of a coach. This description of conveyance requires two camels, one before, and one behind, sedan-fashion, the hinder camel having a by no means enviable berth, as his head is bent down under the vehicle during the whole of the journey. The use of the camel-litter is limited, its great length confining it to those routes which are of convenient width, and free from steep ascents and sharp corners.

The average speed of the ordinary caravan-camels, which are seldom less than ten hours, and sometimes twenty-four hours continuously on the march, is about two miles per hour; but the maherrie or dromedary can accomplish a much swifter rate of progression, being able to travel seventy miles a day for two and three days successively. Colonel Chesney, by employing four dromedaries, journeyed between Baarah and Damascus, a distance of four hundred and fifty-eight miles, in a little more than nineteen days; Laborde went from Alexandria to Cairo (one hundred and fifty miles) in thirty-four hours; and the mails have been carried between Bagdad and Damascus in seven days, at the rate of sixty-nine miles per diem. Still greater celerity was attained by Mehemet Ali, when he wished to communicate from Cairo with Ibrahim Pacha at Antioch. By adopting the system of relays, the distance of five hundred and sixty miles was traversed in the short space of five days and a half.

European travellers have descanted much upon the patience and gentleness of the ship of the desert; but the Arabs would seem to have a less favourable opinion of his temper, as they use no other term than 'camel's anger' by which to designate intense, unforgiving hatred; and when a caravan passes near the spot where the camel of the prophet Saleh was hamstrung, drums are beaten, guns discharged, voices strained, and hands clapped vigorously, for fear their beasts should hear the lamenting and complaining of the prophet's unlucky maherrie, who, neither forgetful nor forgiving, yet haunts the scene of his misfortune. Camels, too, fight each other most furiously; and it is a favourite amusement with the Turk who can afford such a luxury, to pit one against the other, and, pipe in

mouth, watch them rise on their hind-legs, thrust their necks together, and embrace each other with anything but friendly intentions. The indifference with which the camel receives the heaviest blows from his driver, is rather a proof of the toughness of his skin than the result of the innate patience of the animal. When he comes to be loaded for the day's journey, his docility is very questionable. The representative of the *Times* in the Crimea and India thus graphically describes his behaviour at such a time, during the Indian campaign: 'In the rear of each tent were couched three or four camels, which had been brought up noiselessly from their own part of the world, and were now expressing their resentment at present, and their apprehension of future wrongs. The moment the doodwallah pulls the string which is attached to a piece of wood passing through the cartilage of the animal's nostril, the camel, opening its huge mouth, garnished with hideous blackened tusks, projecting like *cheveux de frise* from its lips, and from the depths of its inner consciousness and of its wonderful hydraulic apparatus, gets up groans and roarings full of plaintive anger, the force of which can only be realised by actual audience. When solicited by the jerking of their noses, they condescend to kneel down and tuck their legs under them; they are prevented from rising by a rope which is passed under their fore-knees, and round their necks. All this time their complaints wax furious as the pile grows upon their backs, and do not cease till long after they have risen and stalked off with their loads.'

The load for a camel in India is fixed by the government at 330 pounds; in Arabia, it varies from 360 to 400 pounds; in Persia, from 500 to 600 pounds; in Egypt, it averages 800 pounds; while, according to Tavernier, the Turcoman camel will carry as much as 1500 pounds' weight.

Where the road is tolerably good, the burden-camels of a caravan are tied to each other, the nose-rope of one being fastened to the tail of another, and so they march on, three to ten in a string, in single file; and such creatures of routine are they, that a camel will refuse to proceed if the camel before him is changed for another. In Egypt, the caravans move abreast; and one of fifty camels will shew a front of a mile in extent. The pilgrim-caravan pursues its route principally during the night, lighted on its way with torches. It has been shorn of much of its splendour in modern times. Bagdad's celebrated ruler—

That monarch wise and witty,

Whose special taste for putting wrongs to rights,
Brought down upon him blows and sharp invective
When it pleased him to be his own detective,
To scent out scandals of Arabian nights—

performed the pilgrimage to the Prophet's shrine no less than nine times, with a caravan of 120,000 camels, 900 of that enormous number being employed in carrying Haroun's wardrobe. The sultan of Egypt was accompanied by 500 camels laden with sweetmeats, and 280 bearing pomegranates and other fruits. Every year the sultan of Turkey sends a 'mahmal'—a beautiful covering for the shrine of Mohammed—to Mecca. The camel honoured by being chosen for carpet-bearer is magnificently adorned with ribbons, lace, feathers, and imitative gems. When Hasselquist saw the procession start from Cairo in 1750, this favoured beast carried a pyramidal pavilion six feet high, covered with green silk, under which the mahmal was supposed to lie; but, like other great officials, the carpet-camel did his work by deputy, the precious gift being actually carried by some of his less fortunate brethren. As a reward for 'not doing it,' the mahmal-camel becomes exempt from all labour for the rest of his life, which is passed in a lodging provided for his special use; and he has servants to wait upon him, and due provision made for his sustenance. Spite of the sacred mission of the mahmal-

caravan, the wandering tribes of the desert do not scruple to lay it, like humbler ones, under contribution; the authorities have, in consequence, resolved to abridge the land-journey as much as possible; and this year, for the first time, the mahmal was sent from Cairo to Jeddah by railway, from whence it would be taken by steamer to Suez; still the camel's religious occupation is not quite gone, and the mahmal-carrier, after bearing the sacred carpet to the railway carriage, was provided with a truck to himself.

The camel has served other purposes than those of commerce and religion: he has been pressed into the service of warlike sovereigns, and employed not only to carry the luggage of their armies, but to draw scythed chariots, and to carry bowmen and swordsmen. Semiramis numbered, in one of her hosts, ten myriads of camel-mounted warriors, besides seventy millions of baggage-camels. They were also employed by the strong-minded spouse of Ninus to carry the two millions of artificial elephants with which she marched into Mesopotamia. The legions of Xerxes suffered by their camels being carried away by lions in the night; and Cyrus defeated Croesus by craftily taking advantage of the antipathy the horse bears to the camel. He mounted some of his soldiers on camels, and ordered them to charge the famous Lydian light-horse. The chargers of the latter, rendered ungovernable by fear, fled from the field, and with them the hopes of the wealthiest of monarchs. Camels are still used in our Indian territories. The conqueror of Sind, writing home while making his wonderful march upon the stronghold of the Ameers, exclaims: 'Oh, the baggage, the baggage! it is enough to drive one mad. We have fifteen hundred camels with their confounded long necks, each occupying fifteen feet! Fancy these long devils in a defile, four miles and a quarter of them!' Yet this addition to the regular *impedimenta* of an army was far below the usual figure. Sir Charles is said to have been the first Indian general that marched with less than sixteen camels to carry his own baggage; Lord Keane required three hundred. The former commander declared emphatically that they were utterly unfit for military movements.

The time is possibly not far distant when the camel will be superseded by the great iron horse; but as long as the Arab finds in him a useful servant, meat, drink, clothing, and fuel, we need not wonder at the faith of the true believer, who expects to find a white-winged camel awaiting him as he steps out of his sepulchre, to convey his soul to paradise.

VERY EXTRAORDINARY.

ALL I say is, it's Very Extraordinary. I don't believe in luck, of course; nobody does, I know. Luck is a heathen goddess, and we are not pagans. Certainly not. We do to others what we feel pretty sure others would do to us, and we owe no man anything. Do we? Oh, never mind your tailor; you must owe nine tailors before you have any reason to think you have failed in Christian duty; and as for the baker, he likes it; and the butcher wouldn't be easy unless you had a running account; and so, on the whole, we are tolerable Christians. It is therefore quite clear we cannot allow that events are influenced by luck; neither, for my part, do I think the stars have much to do with it. The fault, dear reader, is not in our stars that we are—undersized, for instance. If it could be proved that upon my being ushered into the world the dog-star put his tail between his legs, and howled with prophetic anguish, I might put some faith in star-influence; but as it is, I don't believe in it. But I do believe in Very Extraordinary. The way I was treated on my last birthday prevents anything like conversion from that faith.

Now, whereas my birthday fell on a Tuesday, things had gone on swimmingly all Monday; my boots had been easy, and there had seemed to be a

majesty in my exterior which awed little boys from offering to clean them; the young ladies in the shops had been affable; the faces of acquaintances had brightened at my approach; my editor had complimented me upon my conscientious carefulness; I had received a letter with a cheque in it; a friend had insisted upon my staying to luncheon; a little girl had asked me to 'ring the top bell,' which always gratifies me, as I'm not much over five feet high; a barber had cut my hair without comment; a tailor had said I 'measured well round the chest;' a Turkish-bath man had shampooed me without making a single observation on the state of my skin, or asking me whether it was not my 'first time;' the waiter at dinner had brought me a napkin without any request on my part; the proprietor (landlords are obsolete—and I rather think I should have said 'attendant' instead of 'waiter') had hoped I had had 'what was to my liking'—a most unusual attention; and one barmaid had whispered to the other, as I was passing out of the door, that some one was 'rather good-looking,' and there was no one else near to whom the observation could apply. I had gone to the French play, been asked by a neighbour to explain a French joke, had by some strange freak of Very Extraordinary been able to do it; and, consequently, had gone to bed contented and happy. *Quid sit futurum cras fuge querere*—don't bother yourself about to-morrow, says the poet; and he is perfectly right; for if I had had the least idea what a night would bring forth, I should not have had a wink of sleep.

Well, the first thing it brought forth—or at least that I saw in the morning, as soon as I looked in the glass—was a large bright-red pimple just on the tip of my nose. That was a birthday present with a vengeance! There is nothing to equal it in Messrs Parkins and Gotto's collection; it was highly coloured, and cheap. You may call it a trifle; but don't tell me; if it's a trifle to have a thing like the safety-lamp of a railway engine at the end of your nose, give me something serious. Besides, you know, or should know, Mr Ecclesiastes, that life is made up of trifles, and not the least among them is a full-sized pimple on the nose. Out of temper at my mishap, I proceeded to shave, and cut myself in two places by reason of my ill-temper; two pieces of court-plaster therefore became necessary, and these added to the nasal ornament, gave me the appearance of having been engaged in some sort of personal encounter, and of having had the worst of it. Upon the breakfast-table lay a letter, seal uppermost, so that I didn't see the handwriting, but having one relation left, I naturally supposed it was a note of congratulation upon an auspicious event; it was—Well, never mind; but my cheque of the preceding day would hardly cover it. I proceeded with a heavy heart to put on my boots. They had been perfectly easy the day before; but now, whether the weather had changed in the night, or I had grown in the extremities, I cannot say, but the labour required to draw them on was Herculean, and the torture when they were on was Tartarean. Staggering down stairs, for the purpose of going out, I was accosted by my landlady with: 'Good mornin', sir; lor', how funny you walk; your boots is too tight, ain't 'em?' to which my response was curt, and elicited from madame a remark, addressed to Abigail, but audible to me, that 'Mr Blank must ha' got out o' bed the wrong side,' though she must know—no one better—that I have no opportunity of getting out of bed but on one side, the other being close against the wall.

So forth into the street to work my way, with here a little business and there a little business, gradually down to the Woolwich Railway, to dine (I hope) with my remaining relation at his elegant villa at Woolwich. He is such a good fellow, he is sure to remember my birthday—in fact, I never knew him fail—and stay at home on purpose to wish me 'many

happy returns of the day.' With a little black bag in one hand and an umbrella in the other, I commence my pilgrimage, and the moment I turn the corner of the street, I meet Binson. I don't like Binson, and how I came to know him passes my comprehension; he never seems to see you unless you are in some uncomfortable state, and then he spies you directly. I'd give him half-a-crown to cut me, but I doubt whether he'd do it for five shillings, now that he has such a chance of triumph; his eyes twinkle and his mouth opens directly he catches a glimpse of me, and he rushes up with, 'My dear fellow, what on earth is the matter with you? What a guy you look! Are you lame?'

'No,' say I gruffly; 'I am not. Are you?'

'Well, no,' says he; 'but you walk so. And what have you been doing to your face?'

'Cut it shaving.'

'Ah; but that wouldn't account for the state of your nose. Why, it attracted my attention directly, or I shouldn't have seen you.'

'It's only a pimple, confound you! I suppose you've had a pimple before now?'

'Not like that, that I know of; and with a recommendation to wear *pannus corium* shoes, and use a razor with a guard, and 'have something done' to my nose, he leaves me ungratefully wishing he may happen to get run over. Then all the shoe-blacks want to 'give 'em a nice polish,' as if I wouldn't be the death of anybody smaller than myself who dared to touch 'em ('em' are my boots) with the softest bristle that ever grew on animal. Why, I shrink at every footstep that clanks behind me, and grin with apprehension at every urchin that crosses my path. This state of mind naturally causes my pace to be uncertain, so that collisions with passers-by are frequent. Moreover, when anybody stops suddenly, or walks backwards, or sidles away from a shop-window, moving one way and looking the other, I am certain to be in the immediate vicinity, and I think it's Very Extraordinary. This kind of progression is inevitably attended with perspiration, and perspiration necessitates mopping, and mopping is done with a pocket-handkerchief, and—by Jove, I haven't brought one! However, here is a shop where they sell them 'ready for use; 'so I step in and buy one. Did you ever buy a pocket-handkerchief 'ready for use? If so, there is no occasion to inform you that 'the use' for which it is 'ready' cannot be 'the use' to which you are in the habit of putting it; it might do tolerably cut into small oblongs for extempore cards of address, or for a 'catch 'em alive' paper, but for the ordinary purpose of handkerchief, give me in preference a sheet of note-paper—a penny newspaper would be in comparison a luxury, if one were not afraid of the print coming off. Of course, I speak of cambric handkerchiefs, for silk I consider out of place; if any one gave me a silk one, I should wear it round my neck.

Now I reach my editor's office. I accost him cheerfully, but he looks grave, and hands me a note with a quiet, 'That concerns you.' I read: 'Sm—It strikes me forcibly that the gentleman (of course he is a gentleman) who reviewed my book in your world-renowned paper, either adopted with respect to it the process which is known as "cutting the leaves and smelling the paper-knife," or deliberately misrepresented my meaning, or, from sheer ignorance, was guilty of a blunder for which a school-boy would have received condign punishment. I allude, of course, to his remarks upon my theory, based upon actual calculation, as to the number of cows' tails which would reach to the moon.'

The truth is, I was wrong; I had made a blunder from sheer ignorance—so did Dr Johnson. The course seemed plain enough: to write a short note saying I had made a blunder, and was very sorry for it, and that the deductions of the theorist in the particular

instance were perfectly correct. Dr Johnson acknowledged his ignorance, why shouldn't I mine? Never mind why: I didn't. I had recourse to irony instead. After inditing my ironical epistle, I take leave of Mr Editor with a heavy heart (for I don't like making mistakes, and being obliged to slur the fact over), and think a little luncheon would do me good. I therefore enter a well-known house of refreshment, take a chop and a glass of stout, and with an amiable smile tender the waiter a shilling in payment. The waiter, who has evidently been brought up at one of those schools where 'particular attention is paid to manners and deportment,' puts one leg over the other, passes his napkin to his left side in the attitude of a wounded stage-hero, and taking the shilling delicately between the tips of his thumb and forefinger, as though the coin were contagious, blandly remarks: 'I'm much obliged to you, sir; but if you 'ave another shillin'—' The use of the figure aposiopesis is accompanied by a significant glance; and the idea of not 'avin' another shillin' is so exasperating to a man who has a natural tendency to be in that position, that I answer 'almost fiercely' (as the novelists say): 'Why, is there anything the matter with that?'

'Well, sir, I should say there was, sir; I should say it was very bad indeed, sir;' and the waiter chuckles at his witticism.

'Oh, it's a bad one, is it?' say I.

'It's a melancholy fact, sir,' says he.

'Come, my good man,' I say, 'here's another shilling; but I came here to eat a chop, and not to listen to your facetiousness; you forget your place, sir;' and I step majestically from the room, whilst I overhear my waiter remarking to his yoke-fellow: 'See that gent with a pimple on his nose, a-hobblin' out? Tried to pass a bad shillin'. Them games won't do here, I can tell 'im.'

I mutter to myself: 'It's Very Extraordinary,' and hail an omnibus. The conductor requests me not to keep them 'waitin' all day,' which I promise faithfully not to do; and while conscientiously endeavouring to perform my promise, I alip as the vehicle begins to move, graze my legs against the edge of the step, fall in the road, and drive my hat nearly over my eyes. Of course, the omnibus has to stop again. 'What's up?' says the driver, and as soon as I am seated, I hear from the conductor the following explanation, gulped out between peals of laughter: 'Gent's tight; tripped himself up with his umbrella, barked his shin, and bonneted himself: such a objec he is!'

Well, think I, I may be tight, for I don't know what it means; anyhow, it's Very Extraordinary. But the worst was to come. Arrived at my destination—the Railway Terminus at London Bridge—and aware that the fare is fourpence, I hunt down the smallest coin in my waistcoat-pocket, hand it to the conductor, and alight as nimbly as my condition will allow, when I am arrested by, 'Hilloa, this 'ere won't do, yer know; our fare's fourpence.'

'I know it is, and I gave you a fourpenny-piece.'

'No, yer didn't; yer gave me a threepenny.'

'Oh, I beg your pardon; I'm sure I thought it was a fourpenny.'

'No, yer didn't; yer know'd it was a threepenny, and yer did it o' purpose. Yer ought to be ashamed o' yerself. It's only females as tries that game on. Call yerself a gen'lman, do yer, and try to make a penny that way!'

He drove away, vociferating to the crowd, 'calls hisself a gen'lman, he does!' though I vow I called myself nothing at all, and consider the whole business as Very Extraordinary. I take my ticket, rush out to the train, and am saluted by a guard with: 'Come along now, can't you—this way—second class or third?'

I answer with some dignity, 'First.'

'First?' says the official with an air of unbelief.

'Ticket, please?'

So I shew my ticket with alacrity, am shewn into

a first-class carriage, but have a Parthian arrow shot at me by the incredulous guard; he leaves me with a caution not to 'smoke in there.' Arrived at Woolwich, I don't know whether I ought to get out at the dock-yard or the arsenal station (for my relation has only lately moved to Woolwich), and after tossing with myself the best two out of three as to which it shall be, get out at the arsenal, and find I've lost: the dock-yard would have been at least a quarter of a mile nearer. However, at last I think my troubles are over; I reach my relation's door, knock cheerily, am confronted by a smiling housemaid, and informed that my relative has gone to Brighton for a week! For the first time in my life he has forgotten my birthday, and I cannot but think it is Very Extraordinary. There is nothing for it but to return to town. The train is just starting, and I am very thirsty; so I purchase a bottle of bitter ale, drink the contents of it in the carriage, in which I am the only passenger, and with a sigh of relief toss the bottle out of window (taking care it shall clear the rail), and lean back reflecting how much there is in life which, even at a cursory glance, appears Very Extraordinary. As soon as we arrive in London, I am surprised by a policeman and guard both doing me the honour of attending at the door of my carriage.

'This 'im?' says the guard.

'That's 'im,' says the policeman; and addressing me, continues: 'Did you throw anythink out o' the winder comin' along, young man?'

'Yes, I did.'

'What were it, now?'

'Only a beer-bottle.'

'Ah! come along o' me, then, please. You've done it!'

'What have I done?'

'Why, the bottle 'it a workin'-man on the line aside o' the 'ed, and putty nigh cooked 'im. I don't know as it 'aven't quite.'

'Good heavens! is the man seriously hurt?'

'Well, I b'lieve he is, but I ain't got no orders about that. My orders was by telegraph to stop a gent with a white 'at, two bits o' court-plaister on 'is face, and a large bright-red pimple on end o' 'is nose; and if that ain't you, I should like to know oo it is.'

'I am afraid it is,' say I sadly, and go with him like a lamb to the slaughter. Fortunately, another 'telegraph' is sent to say that the man is not dangerously hurt, so I am allowed to go after giving my address, and making it about as certain as anything in this world can be that I should be forthcoming when wanted.

Breaking a man's head accidentally with a beer-bottle excites anything rather than appetite; nevertheless, man, being reasonable, must dine. I thought, therefore, under the circumstances, I could not do better than drop in at the tavern where I had the day before been so courteously treated; but Very Extraordinary was there before me, and put things in the right way for going wrong. The landlord was standing at the door as I walked up, and just as I was putting on the friendliest of smiles to greet him, he wheeled slowly round, thrust his hands in his coat-tail pockets, thereby shewing me as he walked away—well, very little civility; the two barmaids whispered and giggled, and I'm sure I heard the word nose. I entered the coffee-room, sat down upon the nearest chair, and was informed by the waiter that 'that place was taken by a gentleman,' and he emphasised the last word in a way peculiar to waiters, and not agreeable to him who receives the information. However, having at last found a place which had not been engaged by a gentleman, I—didn't dine, but—had something to eat, which I cannot better describe than in the words I used to the waiter when he asked me what I'd 'ad.'

'Tough steak,' said I (jocosely), 'stale bread, bad potatoes, and a piece of plum-pudding heated with a red-hot poker' (for I declare there were great black

bars across that edible which I couldn't account for on any other supposition).

The waiter's whole soul was moved; he was speechless with indignation; he made no reply, but walked up to the proprietor, and the latter, who the day before had been so extremely polite (I'm inclined to think *now* he had been drinking), came up to me red-visaged: 'Hem! sir,' says he, 'my waiter tells me you didn't like what you've 'ad, sir. You was a grumblin' the other day, sir' (I only said my knife was blunt). 'If it's the same to you, sir—if you're a-goin' to grumble, sir—what I mean is, sir—when a gen'lman's always a grumblin', sir, we'd rather not 'ave 'is custom, sir. Ex—cuse me, sir, but we ain't used to that sort o' thing, sir—in this 'ouse, sir;' and he gets redder than ever in the gills, and bows repeatedly.

'You're very much mistaken,' say I; 'I did not grumble; I was asked to say what I had had, and I described it to the best of my ability. If you would rather be without my custom' (this with great dignity), 'I can fortunately oblige you in that respect, without much inconvenience;' and I march away, thinking that if a waiter may be jocular to me, and I may not be jocular to a waiter, it is Very Extraordinary.

After this series of misfortunes, my spirits are at the very lowest ebb, and I think I will go home.

'Call me a Hansom,' I say to the waterman at the stand; 'not that one' (as an expectant driver flourishes his whip), 'it has such a wretched-looking horse.' I had no idea that 'cabby' had heard me, but he had, and abuse fell fast and thick upon my head. 'Oss!' said he, 'what do *you* know about a 'oss? Why, yer don't know a 'oss from a donkey, *you* don't; why don't yer git yer nuss to come out wi' yer to look arter yer, eh?' To which I make no answer, but smile as blandly as possible. At this, 'cabby' breaks out afresh: 'I'd take my mouth by the quarter, if I was you, and not 'ave it from ear to ear, like you've got it: *you* tell a 'oss!' Meanwhile, I am seated, and having paid first, that there may be no squabble at the end, proceed to fall asleep. Having reached my place of abode, the driver shakes me by the shoulder, wakes me up, and coolly demands his fare. 'I paid you before starting,' 'Lor' bless you, sir, you've been asleep and dreamin'.' 'Well, I sha'n't pay again.' 'Then I shall speak to this pleeceman.' A policeman is, curiously enough, at hand; we each tell our tale, and the policeman insists upon it that I not only was, but am still, 'in liquor;' and that if I don't pay the 'poor' man his fare, he'll lock me up. Vowing swift vengeance, I comply, not without taking the numbers of both cabman and policeman, meaning on the morrow to get justice; in the meantime, I trudge up to bed. At last, I think, as I turn down the clothes, I shall have a little peace, when—a sputter, and a whish, and a huge black cat jumps past me. Fitting conclusion to a day's troubles—trivial and contemptible compared with your trials, sir, or your anxieties, ma'am, but exceedingly disagreeable, I can assure you; and you must allow that the fact—which you will not be rude enough to doubt—of their happening all in one day warrants my belief in Very Extraordinary.

CHARITY IN WOMEN.

An article on this subject, recently published in one of the weekly newspapers (*London Review*), appears to us of such a character, that some of its leading ideas may very properly be transferred here for a more wide diffusion, as well as more permanent preservation.

'True charity,' it begins, 'is wide-spread as the heaven above us, and, like that heaven, should rain down upon us all alike its equal portions of love and blessing. . . . Charity, rightfully understood, is the brightest grace of womanhood; the most beautiful flower in a garden where nature has planted her loveliest; but it is a

flower which may soon degenerate into a weed, if not carefully watched, and which needs intelligent culture to prevent a rank or sickly growth.'

After some observations and remarks on almsgiving, we come to the following: 'When charity to the poor takes the form of personal visitation—of teaching wretched, unromantic, unlovely children—of boldly braving sights and sounds, and smells ineffably distressing to refined senses; when it means doing that which is abhorrent to flesh and blood, for God's sake and our brother's, then it is true charity—charity wafting incense up to heaven sweeter far than any shed about the altar of church devotions.'

But, 'even with the faithful professors, there is the true way and the untrue, the right and the wrong, the graceful and the graceless. Take the example of one very frequent kind of charitable woman, for instance—the generous-hearted, dense-nerved woman, with distinct ideas of her own, great in theories of rule and government, and with an insatiable desire to put every living soul to rights. She goes to the homes of the poor as if they belonged to her, recognising no right of privacy, no right of exclusion on their parts, but visiting them spiritually and temporally, as a something between an inquisitor and a confessor, and putting her hand on all concerning them from the state of their floors to the state of their souls. Unconsciously, and as if consecrated to the office by the anointment of birth, she translates into our nineteenth century the habits of thought belonging to the feudal times, and without meaning to be offensive, violates every principle of good feeling and good taste before she has been five minutes in the house. This is the woman who weights all her charities with lead, and makes the poor pay in soul for what they gain in body. There is not a personal kindness that she does to them, but she mars by some flagrant act of discourtesy; her arrogance robs her grace of all its charms, and her mode of giving renders the recipient of her dole more humiliated than benefited. But she means to do well, and only blunders by the way because of the coarse texture of her brain, and the rough-hewn quality of her nerves. Such women—positive, dictatorial, interfering—are the terror of their neighbourhood, and the scourge of the district to which they may be appointed visitor. The poor acknowledge their well-meanness, and are eloquent in their good gifts; but, Lord love you! one kindly word is worth all their rice and blankets; and a half-hour's quiet talk, with a little morsel of comfort in it, does more good than a day's scolding from them, even with half-a-crown at the back of it! The poor are quick-witted, and know far more than such women as these give them credit for; above all things, they know that high-handed almsgiving is not charity, that love is better than gifts, and sympathy than pence; and that charity, to be true, must be the rich quality or expression of sympathy and human kindness.'

The writer then goes on to shew how charity of judgment ranks far before the charity of mere almsgiving; and 'where,' it asks, 'is this more nobly shewn than in loving pity for the fallen?' But to continue our extracts into what follows on this part of the subject were to do violence to its sacred meaning, and to break in upon the flow of the writer's noble sentiments would be harsh and discordant. We have already well-nigh given half of the entire article, but its concluding sentences we cannot resist quoting:

'Charity in woman should encompass trust in the unknown as one of its chief properties, for then it is of that kind which "thinketh no evil," of that kind which is potent, true, and living, while all the rest is only sham. Charity to the unknown—charity, love, trust, belief in the better things of human nature, faith in the nobler instincts of man, discredit of base reports until undeniably proved, denial of evil deeds, if by charity a better issue from unhappy appearances may be found, acceptance of the noble and the good, but rejection now and finally of the unlovely and the bad—this is the trust in the unknown, the faith in the absent, the protection of the unprotected,

and the cherished truth of love, which makes women very beautiful and dear, and bids them be God-blessed of the generations.'

W O O E D.

In leafy girths, the garden-walls
Around the limes and plats were drawn—
Round many a myrtled interspace,
And crisping breadth of summer lawn.
High on the wild-sculpt Tuscan urn,
The peacock drowsed; and far below
Ranged many a terrace statue-dusked,
And fringed with balustrades of snow.
'I love,' I said; she silent turned
Her thoughtful face afrent the south,
While twenty shadows, passion-winged,
Ran round the curvings of her mouth.

I stole one hand across the seat,
And touched her dainty, shining arm,
Leant to her neck, and whispered through
The trees that hid her small ear's charm.
The hot wind stirred the pleached grapes,
And sifted half the fountain's froth;
'And if I love, or dream I love,
Sweet cousin mine, need'st thou be wroth?'
One moment trifling with her fan,
She pressed the margin to her brows;
'Love,' she replied, 'and peace and rest
Dwell in your heart, and hearth, and house.'

'Wouldst see the picture I adore?'
Through pensive lips she answered 'Yes';
Then, slowly breathing, turned to me
Her sweet face white with pain's excess.
I drew the mirror from my breast,
And placed it in her passive hand;
'Look, cousin, look at her I love,
The brightest blossom in the land.'
A faint blush bloomed aslant her brows,
Her low voice trembled through and through,
She drooped her head—'Ah, cousin mine,
God help her, for she loves you too.'

Then rising up, close-linked we paced
Where the dun almonds dusk'd the swarth;
Nor heard the bells of Time, until
The great stars wheeled across the north—
Till half the palms lapsed black in shade,
And half the poplar tops grew pale,
And woke, amid the passion-flowers,
The mellow-throated nightingale.
Rich peace was ours; from bird and plant,
To the faint splendour in the blue,
I fancy myriad voices sighed:
'God bless her, for she loves you too.'

CAYIARK.

The Proprietors of *Chambers's Journal* have the pleasure to announce, that in consequence of the Repeal of the Paper Duty, they will be enabled, with the commencement of their next volume, in January 1862, to present its Readers with a sheet of better material than has hitherto been practicable. Earnest efforts will also be made to improve the literature of the work, so that, in the increased competition of able and worthy rivals, the FATHER OF ITS CLASS may yet be able to retain a fair share of popular favour.

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